

## **Chapter 4.2.2:**

## **Neighborhood and Community Cohesion**

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The Project site is predominantly located on private property encompassed within Letchworth State Park and adjacent vacant rural land; a small area of parkland is also included as part of the Project site. The closest community is the Hamlet of Portageville, which is approximately one mile south of the existing Portageville Bridge.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would require Norfolk Southern to permanently acquire approximately 2.71 acres of property. Of that, 1.95 acres of the land to be acquired are located in Letchworth State Park. Norfolk Southern would also obtain a permanent easement from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) for a 0.21-acre area adjacent to the existing embankment where access for ongoing slope stabilization is required. Norfolk Southern is coordinating with OPRHP regarding the transfer of the park property. Since the Portageville Bridge Project would convert property that is currently parkland that received federal funds under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act from recreational use to a non-park use, approval by the National Park Service (NPS) is required for the conversion and replacement of parkland subject to the LWCF Act. Any NPS approval must be based on a determination that the conversion meets the conditions under Section 6(f) of the LWCF Act (see Chapter 6 of this DEIS for the Section 6(f) evaluation).

For the private property outside the park that is required for the Project, Norfolk Southern will acquire the property from the landowner under the authority granted railroads to condemn property under the New York Railroad Law. Any acquisition by condemnation of the private property has and will continue to follow the requirements of the New York State Eminent Domain Procedure Law, as well as the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as applicable. At this time, in accordance with applicable law, which requires Norfolk Southern to attempt to acquire private property by negotiated agreement before moving forward with condemnation of it, Norfolk Southern has negotiated a fee acquisition of the private property by agreement among the parties pursuant to a purchase option. In the event that acquisition of the private property outside the park pursuant to the purchase option does not occur, Norfolk Southern in accordance with the reference law will condemn the property.

The Project would not divide neighborhoods, isolate part of a neighborhood, generate substantial new development, or otherwise affect community cohesion. Since the Project does not require the acquisition of occupied dwellings or businesses, it would not displace residents or employees.

Overall, therefore, the Project would not result in adverse impacts on neighborhood character and stability.